"¿Pero no ves que es marica?" Maxi Rubín and Male Gender/Sexual Deviance in *Fortunata y Jacinta*

Eva María Copeland

Dickinson College

This essay argues that the representation of Maximiliano Rubín in Benito Pérez Galdós' 1886-87 novel *Fortunata y Jacinta* is largely based on typologies of male gender and sexual deviance described in medical texts and popular sexology literature during the second half of the nineteenth century in Spain.[1] My reading of *Fortunata y Jacinta* places the novel at a crucial place in emerging heterosexual/homosexual definitional categories in Spain, at a time when uneven modernization put many debates about nation, class, gender and sexuality at the forefront. I postulate that the novel questions "stable" notions of male gender and sexuality by invoking those signifiers of deviance that are described in medical and sexological discourses. In *Fortunata y Jacinta*, these signifiers all cluster around the character of Maxi Rubín.

In addition, and concurrently, this essay seeks to enact a queer reading of *Fortunata y Jacinta* by analyzing performative acts in the text – those places where silence, forceful utterance, violence, and ambiguity structure the narrative. Most of the performative aspects of the text are, not surprisingly, focused around Maxi. This essay will focus on one key moment: the performative act of Maxi's naming as a *marica*. That this happens at a pivotal moment in the novel proposes that the suggestive representation of Maxi in *Fortunata y Jacinta* served as a highly visible boundary marker around which what we now think of as homosexuality was made visible later on into the twentieth century.

Part of the project of this essay is to contribute to emerging scholarship about the ways in which late nineteenth-century Spanish society thought

1 An early version of this essay was read on the panel "Alternative Sexualities in Nineteenth-Century Spanish Realism" organized by the Asociación Internacional de Galdosistas at the 2014 Modern Language Association convention in Chicago, Illinois.

about sexuality; to help excavate the "indigenous terms, concepts, logics and practices" of this society, an activity implicitly grounded in a historicist politics (Halperin 2002: 17).[2] It must be said here that I do not assume an unproblematic correspondence between discursive representation and historical reality that renders literature to simply being an uncritical and unfiltered "mirror" of the society in which it is written. Numerous critics, most notably Jo Labanyi, have alerted us to the idea that the modernity Pérez Galdós' novels explore is constituted by representation and that the genius of Galdós's work – especially in the *Novelas contemporáneas* – is his awareness that realism "[...] problematizes the relationship between representation and reality [...] by blurring the boundary between them while at the same time making it clear that representation is unreliable" (Labanyi 2000: 208). By depicting contemporary society, the realist novel served as a forum where issues surrounding economic, political and social modernization were debated. These novels constructed the reading public as an "[...] imagined community united by common anxieties" (Labanyi 2000: 2-6), including in many cases anxieties about gender and sexuality.

It is by now taken as axiomatic that the second half of the nineteenth century was a period in which the rules that governed gendered identity were thought to be breaking down in many Western societies (Showalter 1990: 3). Akiko Tsuchiya has theorized this about Spain in particular, explaining that "[...] the perception that *fin-de-siglo* society as a whole was moving toward gender slippage and indifferentiation – generated a great deal of cultural anxiety" (Tsuchiya 2011: 112; also Labanyi 2000). For example, anxieties over changing women's roles contributed to a questioning of the feminine ideal, "el ángel del hogar". There are numerous studies dedicated to analyzing women characters who deviate from the feminine norm in Benito Pérez Galdós' novels.[3] More recently, critics have started attending to the many representations of non-normative masculinities present in the literature of this period.[4] As Tsuchiya reminds us:

2 See pp. 17-19 in Halperin (2002), pp. 45-48 in Sedgwick (1990), and pp. 18-19 in Jagose (1996).

3 See Aldaraca (1990), Charnon-Deutsch (1990), Jagoe (1990), Charnon-Deutsch/Labanyi (1995), Labanyi (2000), and Tsuchiya (2011).

4 See Copeland (2007, 2009-10), Harpring (2007), Tsuchiya (2011), McKinney (2012), and Erwin (2012).

> [...] many literary works expose gender normativity to be more no more than an ideal, a regulatory fiction impossible for real bodies and subjectivities to achieve [...]. For their part, deviant male figures, who pose a challenge to the heterosexual ideal of masculinity – 'effeminate' or emasculated men, or those who embody otherwise conflictive and conflicted masculinities – represent the counterpart of deviant female subjectivity (Tsuchiya 2011: 113).

Deviance from sex and gender norms for men is readily apparent in many narratives from the second half of the nineteenth century. For example, Bonifacio Reyes in Leopoldo Alás' (Clarín) *Su único hijo* is oft-cited as an example of a subject whose masculinity is often in doubt (Tsuchiya 2011). In Benito Pérez Galdós' 1882 novel, *El amigo Manso*, Máximo Manso fails to project "bourgeois respectability" and thus normative masculinity (Copeland 2007). Many critics have commented on Maxi's deviancy from sex and gender norms of the period in *Fortunata y Jacinta*; however, even while noting this few have specifically tackled the subject.[5] One of the small number of critics to do so is Jo Labanyi, who has said that Maxi's masculinity is problematic and that he "[...] regresses into effeminacy and infantilism", reflecting contemporary theories of degeneration (2000: 195-196, 202-204). More broadly, Ricardo Krauel argues that in *Fortunata y Jacinta* "[...] se exacerban las correspondencias con los planteamientos desde los que se 'explican' (y, en buena medida, desde los que se 'medicalizan') las heterologías genérico-sexuales [...]" (Krauel 2001: 83). However, no scholarly study has taken into account the representation of Maxi Rubín explicitly as a liminal figure of masculine gender and male sexuality, and especially his naming in the text as a *marica* and thus a male invert.

In addition, very few critics have tackled texts from this period from a queer theory perspective. If Eve Sedgwick is correct in asserting that "[...] virtually any aspect of modern Western culture must be, not merely incomplete, but damaged in its central substance to the degree that it does not incorporate a critical analysis of modern homo/heterosexual definition" (1990: 1), then this type of analysis is both timely and urgent, given the scarcity of criticism.[6] However, what would a queer analysis need to take into consideration? Queer theory has been defined as that which is

5 Numerous critics have commented on the possible reasons for Maxi's sexual impotence. For a partial list, see Ullman/Allison (1974), Chamberlin (1982, 1985), Ribbans (1977, 1989), Hoddie (1985), Larsen (1996), Labanyi (2000), Krauel (2001).

6 For one such analysis, see Copeland (2009-10: 10).

undefinable or problematical: "[...] to make strange, to frustrate, to counteract, to delegitimise, to camp up – heteronormative knowledges and institutions, and the subjectivities and socialities that are (in)formed by them and that (in)form them" (Sullivan 2003: vi). The nature of the relationship between Hispanism and queer theory has been fraught with tension and unevenness because of the problematic importation of terms and structures from Anglo-American theory into Hispanism, for example the focus on the gay/straight binary or the concept of the closet as a structuring element in texts.[7] There are two related ideas, however, that I am proposing can be useful as starting points for a queer reading, especially in terms of male gender and sexuality, in nineteenth-century peninsular literature and cultural studies: a focus on masculine (active)/feminine (passive) patterns in texts, and the concept and structuring of the public and the private spheres in relation to male subjectivity in these narratives. A brief sketch of these two areas and their relevance to this study should suffice to provide a theoretical context and a starting point for this essay.

Robert Richmond Ellis, in his introduction to the collection of essays *Reading and Writing the Ambiente*, observes that many Hispanic texts highlight performative instead of identity-based elements of sexuality (for example gay/straight), which is often associated with the active/passive pattern so often found in these narratives: "[...] the so-called *activo* enacts a masculinity irreducible to homosexuality. The *pasivo*, in contrast, through his perceived passivity, is endowed with the essence of the feminine and, when such vocabulary is employed, with the identity of homosexuality. In this way homoeroticism is subsumed within gender" (Ellis 2000: 6). Within late nineteenth-century peninsular Spanish literature, a focus on the active/passive binary is illuminating, because so many of the male characters who are perceived to have gender or sexual deviance are marked very explicitly as passive, and as such, labeled effeminate or other terms that are connected to the feminine. This binary also holds when looking at medical and sexological literature of the time in Spain, because the typologies produced by medical and psychiatric discourses relied heavily on the active/passive binary in order to define them.

The second concept that can be useful is a focus on the structuring and the transgression of the public and the private in relation to male subjectivity, something that feminist critics have already done extensive work on in

7 See Smith/Bergmann (1995); Ellis (2000); Martínez Expósito (2004).

relation to the private sphere, domesticity and the feminine ideal (Aldaraca 1990; Jagoe 1990; Labanyi 2000). Martínez Expósito argues that while Sedgwick's central contention that the closet and its gradual aperture over the last hundred years is important in Anglo-American cultures, this is not the case for Hispanic cultures, where other metaphors used to talk about homosexuality predominate (2004: 68-72; Smith/Bergman 1995: 2). In particular, the perception of the permeability and transgression of public and private spaces has special implications for constructions of gender and sexuality for men because if they transgress into the private/domestic sphere, or do not occupy themselves with properly "public" affairs, they risk being seen as "feminine". This, then, does not mesh with the concept of the closet, but is instead a transgression of spatial and social spaces that threatens to destabilize and blur divisions that are deemed fundamentally separate by nineteenth century society. It is in the liminal space created by transgressive subjectivities that queer analyses can work productively.

According to historians Richard Cleminson and Francisco Vázquez García, the model for alternative genders/sexualities for men during the nineteenth century in Western societies includes five broad categories: "[...] active sodomy, sexual inversion, effeminacy, homosexuality and homosociality" (Cleminson/Vázquez García 2007: 9).[8] These types, according to the model of the multiplicity of subject positions, existed in a "variable relationship with the categories of sex, gender and hence sexuality" and can be understood in relation with changing associations and definitions between each one as well as cultural expectations surrounding gender and sexuality during a particular historical period (Cleminson/Vázquez García 2007: 9). In Spain a "Mediterranean" model of male sexuality has tended to differentiate between the active or passive role and by degrees of effeminacy (Cleminson/Vázquez García 2007: 9-10). The process of the medicalization of the sodomite into the homosexual during the nineteenth century saw these two "traditional" categories of male sex and gender deviancies – the *marica* (the effeminate or passive fairy) and the *maricón* (the "active" homosexual) – incorporated into the new medical, hygienic, and psychiatric discourses that began to actively categorize them (Cleminson/Vázquez García 2007: 9-11; Cleminson 2004). From about 1850 onwards, the shift in medical and psychiatric discourses from the

8 Cleminson and Vázquez García work from the taxonomy proposed by David M. Halperin (2002).

older category of the sodomite to the relatively newer category of the homosexual should be seen not as a progressive and linear event, but rather as an "[...] irregular and hybrid approximation to new theoretical paradigms" of non-normative male gender and sex categories during the nineteenth century in Spain (Cleminson/Vázquez García 2007: 49). They argue that sensitivity to categories that establish a relationship with same-sex desire allows a genealogy of "sexually deviant subject formations" to be traced through "clusters of signifiers" around what eventually we conceive of as male homosexuality today (Cleminson/Vázquez García 2007: 13).

Those signifiers include the pejoratively-marked terms *marica* and *maricón*. The term *marica* has been present in the *Diccionario de la lengua castellana de la RAE* from its first edition in 1734. The 1884 edition defines *marica* much as earlier editions do: as an effeminate male, known purely through gender characteristics: "[h]ombre afeminado y de poco ánimo y esfuerzo" (Real Aacedemia Española 1884: 680, col. 1). The word *maricón* gets an explicit sexual connotation in 1884, when it is defined by the term *marica* and *sodomita* first appears in the definition.[9] This meshes with Cleminson's and Vázquez Garcia's model of the development of alternative typologies of masculinities and the active/passive pattern.

An example of the usage of the term *marica* can be seen in popular sexological and hygienist texts of the period. In 1865, the hygienist Pedro Felipe Monlau explained the word *marica* in the context of a description of hermaphrodism in his popular text *Higiene del matrimonio:*

> ¿Existen en la especie humana verdaderos hermafroditas, o individuos que reúnan los dos sexos? No. Lo que hay es uno que otro varón imperfecto que presenta muchos de los caracteres exteriores de las hembras, así como una que otra hembra con varios de los atributos masculinos. Lo que hay son algunos maricas, u hombres de textura floja, de facciones mujeriles, voz afeminada, carácter tímido, y aparato genital poco desarrollado; y también algunas [sic] marimachos o mujeres hombrunas (*viragines*), de costumbres masculinas, voz ronca, barba poblada, clítoris muy abultado, etc. (Monlau 1865: 140).[10]

9 According to the 1884 dictionary, the term *maricón* is solely defined by two terms: "marica" and "sodomita". A look at earlier editions from the beginning of the century reveals that *maricón* is defined as "[e]l hombre afeminado y cobarde", a definition that did not get the additional and explicitly sexual definition of "sodomita" until the 1884 edition. According to the same dictionary, *sodomía* is "[c]oncúbito entre personas de un mismo sexo, o contra el orden natural". *Sodomita* is defined as someone "[q]ue comete sodomía" (Real Academia Española 1884: 984, col. 1).

10 *Higiene del matrimonio*, arguably the most popular lay medical manual of the 19th century in Spain, was first published in 1853. Thirteen editions were published.

According to Monlau, a *marica* is classifiable because of visible and knowable characteristics, all of which connote femaleness: weakness, high voice, timidity, impotence. As Cleminson and Vázquez Garcia point out, during this period medical and psychiatric discourses began to classify deviance in males not only though possessing particular physical characteristics, but also a particular psyche (Cleminson/Vázquez Garcia 2007: 42).

During the last quarter of the nineteenth century medical, psychiatric and other discourses almost always prioritized gender over sexual deviance, and in many cases, the two were conflated (Cleminson/Vázquez García 2007: 66-9). In Spain the separation between sexual and gender deviance (as we understand it today) did not happen until the first third of the twentieth century (2007: 11). However, many different discourses that discussed deviance made a connection between gender deviance and sexual aberrations, such as masturbation and impotence. Older conceptual models (such as the sodomite), newer theories in criminology and legal medicine, and popular sexological literature all pointed to the invert as an individual who transgressed the boundaries between masculinity and femininity (Cleminson/Vázquez García 2007: 62). Within this framework, the male invert was identifiable primarily because of outward characteristics that transgressed gender norms, although sexual aberrations were often noted as well. The effeminate "fairy" or *marica* thus, as Richard Cleminson argues, "[...]increasingly constituted a boundary object for masculine gender and male sexuality in the years of the late 19th century and the early 20th century; a representational and organizational principle around which homosexuality was invoked and made visible" (Cleminson 2004: 416).

Fortunata y Jacinta underscores Maxi's deviance from gender norms by pointing to visible characteristics which connote effeminacy and deviancy from the male norm. For example, Maxi's body is described in terms which signify weakness: "Era de cuerpo pequeño y no bien conformado, tan endeble que parecía que se lo iba a llevar el viento, la cabeza chata [...]" (Pérez Galdós 1994, 1: 456). The description of his skin is especially evocative: "Su piel era lustrosa, fina, cutis de niño con transparencias de mujer desmedrada y clorótica" (Pérez Galdós 1994, 1: 456). It is this last description that particularly connotes femaleness because chlorosis (a type of anemia) was an illness that was associated only with women.

Another characteristic which points to gender deviance is Maxi's voice. In times of stress, his voice gets high-pitched and sounds like a falsetto (Pérez Galdós 1994, 1: 707). Maxi is also repeatedly described as docile

and unable to assert himself, which starts with the inability to express himself orally:

> Su timidez, lejos de disminuir con los años, parecía que aumentaba. Creía que todos se burlaban de él considerándole insignificante y para poco. Exageraba sin duda su inferioridad, y su desaliento le hacía huir del trato social [...] Cuando iba al café con los amigos, estaba muy bien si no había más que dos o tres. En este caso hasta se le soltaba la lengua y se ponía a hablar sobre cualquier asunto. Pero como se reunieran seis u ocho personas enmudecía, incapaz de tener una opinión sobre nada. Si se veía obligado a expresarse, o porque se querían quedar con él o porque sin malicia le preguntaban algo, ya estaba mi hombre como la grana y tartamudeando (Pérez Galdós 1994, 1: 459-460).

Maxi's difficulty expressing himself also extends to his interactions with Fortunata: when they meet, he is unable to speak to her (Pérez Galdós 1994, 1: 464-467) and gropes to find something to say (Pérez Galdós 1994, 1: 468). When one of Maxi's university classmates, Olmedo, tells risqué stories as entertainment for their group of friends, Maxi is too embarrassed and timid to tell him to stop (Pérez Galdós 1994, 1: 466-467). His voice also fails him at another significant point in the novel – the confrontation with Juanito over Fortunata (Pérez Galdós 1994, 1: 707).

Another visible marker that could signal gender deviance for men was an association with the dandy. In this regard, Maxi's care with his clothing and appearance is suggestive. The dandy, a figure "[d]eeply connected to modernity and its cultural expressions in fashion, urbanization, and the cult of self" was a stock character which was more often than not negatively portrayed precisely because he was connected to the consumption of fashion, seen as a female domain (Heneghan 2015: 42-6). For example, the narrator notes that "En la ropa [Maxi] era muy mirado, y gustaba de hacerse trajes baratos y de moda, que cuidaba como a las niñas de sus ojos" (Pérez Galdós 1994, 1: 459). Another reference to Maxi's care in his appearance makes the connection to dandy-like behavior: "Encargábase calzado con tacones altos, y se esmeraba en vestir bien y en atender a ciertos perfiles de que solo se ocupan los *dandys* [sic]" (Pérez Galdós 1994, 2: 169). Jessica Feldman has noted that the dandy's awareness of representation and appearances has had implications for the construction of male gender norms during this period (Feldmann 1993: 13). While Maxi is not a dandy per se, the explicit reference to the dandy that Pérez Galdós makes and the cultural connection between fashion and problematic masculinity

also made is indicative of a deeper preoccupation with male deviance in the text.

The narrative, while underscoring visible characteristics of gender deviance and indeed prioritizing these, also pointedly comments on Maxi's deviance from sexual norms for men. Everyone, it seems, has an opinion regarding whether Maxi can perform sexually with a woman or is impotent. For example, Maxi's aunt, doña Lupe, gives him lots of freedom because: "[...] le creía inaccesible a los vicios por razón de su pobreza física, de su natural apático y de la timidez que era el resultado de aquellas desventajas" (Pérez Galdós 1994, 1: 458-9). Indeed, she questions whether Maxi likes women at all: "Tú te pasas el día y la mitad de la noche en alguna conspiración [...] porque por el lado de las mujeres no temo nada, francamente. Ni a ti te gusta eso, ni puedes aunque te gustara" (Pérez Galdós 1994, 1: 498). Papitos – doña Lupe's young maid – laughs at Maxi's plans with Fortunata because she overheard doña Lupe say that Maxi cannot get married, the implication being that he is impotent and therefore cannot be a good husband (Pérez Galdós 1994, 1: 502). Olmedo makes several veiled references to Maxi's impotence and lack of virility (Pérez Galdós 1994, 1: 467).[11] But perhaps the most damning questions and comments come from Fortunata: "Un marido que tiene menos fuerza que la mujer no es, no puede ser marido" (Pérez Galdós 1994, 1: 505). In another instance, Fortunata openly questions Maxi's masculinity: "¿Pero no le ven, no le ven que ni siquiera parece un hombre?" (Pérez Galdós 1994, 1: 511). Significantly, after his wedding to Fortunata, Maxi cannot consummate the wedding night because of illness:

> Y el pobre chico no se encontraba en aptitud de expresarle su desmedido amor de otro modo que por manifestaciones relacionadas exclusivamente con el pensamiento y con el corazón. Palabras ardientes sin eco en ninguna concavidad de la máquina humana, impulsos de cariño propiamente ideales, y de aquí no salía, es decir, no podía salir (Pérez Galdós 1994, 1: 683).

Maxi's sexual impotence is assumed by everyone around him. In addition, his impotence is two-fold: he is not only sexually impotent but also so-

11 Francisco Caudet's footnotes in his edition of *Fortunata y Jacinta* try to clarify the meaning of these words in the text: "Galdós creó toda una serie de palabras compuestas [...] que resultan a veces difíciles de descifrar. Hay que interpretar esta palabra compuesta como una velada referencia a la impotencia-homosexualidad del meritorio a boticario y... ¿al amor de una mujer como Fortunata?" (Pérez Galdós 1994, 1: 467).

cially impotent because he is financially dependent on his aunt doña Lupe and is unable to change his situation and strengthen his relationship with Fortunata.

Another point of contact between contemporary medical and sexological accounts on gender and sexual deviance and Maxi is his mental illness, which gets progressively worse towards the end of the text after his discovery of Fortunata's infidelity. Mental instability was in many cases also seen as a possible characteristic of gender and sexual deviance because it was often linked with masturbation (seen as a sexual aberration) and thus the loss of virility (Peratoner 1870: 83-100, 1880: 139-45). Many commentators, such as the writer and translator Amancio Peratoner (pseudonym of Gerardo Blanco), agreed that the masturbator would at some point become mentally unstable:

> El masturbador [...] llega insensiblemente a perder todas cuantas facultades morales tenía [...] Altérase cada día más su memoria y no puede retener las cosas más comunes ni enlazar las ideas más sencillas; las mayores capacidades y los talentos más sublimes se hallan desde luego anonadados [...] Sucede aún muy comúnmente que la locura y el más completo frenesí se les manifiesta desde luego (1992 [1874]: 68).

Maxi's mental instability becomes more pronounced as the novel progresses, and although he has periods when he seems to be getting better (Pérez Galdós 1994, 2: 416-48), during the second half of the novel he oscillates between sanity and insanity. Similarly, the masturbator depicted in sensationalist sexological literature alternates between melancholic moods and full-blown rages:

> El ser caído, que se siente impotente, se abisma en una tristeza y un desaliento profundos; fáltale el ánimo para soportar su vergüenza y su miseria; la vida no tiene ya para el encantos, ni sabor; ha perdido su dignidad, su carácter esencial, su importancia relativamente a la especie; está muerto, o más bien, sepultado vivo en su despojo mortal [...] El desdichado huye de la sociedad, buscando tinieblas y silencio; una mirada humana le ofende, le aterra, le anonada; imagina que todo el mundo adivina o cuando menos sospecha su humillación; desconfía de cuantos le rodean; una broma inocente, una alusión vaga y sin objeto, una simple palabra bastan para trastornar su espíritu; vengaríase sin piedad, si su valor igualase a su desesperación y a su cólera (Peratoner 1880: 140).

Maxi's erratic behavior in the second half of *Fortunata y Jacinta* echoes the passage above. He continually alternates between depression to paranoia; for example Maxi believes that someone has stolen his honor and that his hot chocolate is poisoned (Pérez Galdós 1994, 2: 276-81). His insanity can be read as a metaphorical way to remove the need to conform to a heteronormative construction of masculinity. Maxi is aware that his body produces the signification for a gendered identity, because in his dreams Maxi's body (*la bestia*) produces the meanings necessary for a normative gendered identity to be established: "Si no tengo sueño, a Dios gracias. Cuando duermo algo, sueño que soy hombre, es decir, que la bestia me amarra, me azota y hace de mí lo que le da la gana [...]" (Pérez Galdós 1994, 2: 320). It is finally decided by his family that he must be institutionalized in Leganés, the house for the insane in Madrid.

Mental illness was also linked to degeneration and to the hereditary transmission of a "mal de familia" (Larsen 1996). In Maxi's case, the promiscuity of his late mother and the family's suspected Jewish origins all form part of an inherited malady that the three brothers suffer from, albeit in multiple and differing ways (Larsen 1996). In his 1876 edition of *Higiene del matrimonio*, Pedro Felipe Monlau notes that sexual aberration (in this case masturbation) and thus poor health can be passed on to the next generation:

> Si el masturbador llega por azar a la virilidad, no cuente con buena salud, ni vida longeva: resígnese a la más vergonzosa impotencia y renuncia a la fecundidad, o sepa que, cuando más, transmitirá su menguada complexión a una prole raquítica y desgraciada (1876: 624).

In discourses that discussed degeneration alternative sexualities were labeled as "degenerate forms of adult sexual experience, since they were all ascribed to the Other" (Gilman 1985: 87).

In medical and sexological discourses, typologies of male deviancy ultimately depended on the identification of visible and knowable characteristics. As noted earlier, it was at the end of the nineteenth century that newly institutionalized medical and legal discourses began to produce taxonomies centering on homo/heterosexual definitions (Cleminson/Vázquez García 2007: 2). Although in Spain the medicalization of alternative sexualities was not in response to a criminalization of actual acts as it was in other countries (Cleminson/Vázquez García 2007: 33-35, 66), the taxonomical impulse to categorize gender and sexuality "[...] left no space

in the culture exempt from the potent incoherencies of homo/heterosexual definition" (Sedgwick 1990: 2). The understanding of virtually any major structure of Western culture must be understood in the light of the long and pervasive crisis of modern homo/heterosexual definition (Sedgwick 1990).

Eve Sedgwick has theorized that this crisis is manifested in the performative aspects of texts. Taken from J.L. Austin's theory of performatives in language, the performative carries out its action in the very act of speaking it (Butler 1990: 225). It is precisely in the public nature of performatives: who, what, when and why of a performative and its reception, that Sedgwick bases her definition (Sedgwick 1990: 2-3). Included in this idea are those places where silence, forceful utterance, violence, and incoherence structure the narrative. Indeed, *Fortunata y Jacinta* is structured around a series of binaries that are put into play by the semantic instability that mark each of them. These binary terms – secrecy/disclosure, public/private, and known/unknown – are not in play by accident. Rather, they are epistemologically marked by the "historical specificity of homosocial/homosexual definition" which is present in most Western cultures from the second half of the nineteenth century (Sedgwick 1990: 10-11, 72-73). It is in the instability and the struggles for meaning of these binaries that become increasingly fused with the homosexual subject according to Sedgwick (1990: 74).

One of the primary ways that these binaries are fundamental to *Fortunata y Jacinta* and its interrogation of gender and sexuality can be seen in Maxi's and Juanito's fight over Fortunata, in which Maxi is named a *marica* by one of the onlookers (Pérez Galdós 1994, 1: 704-09). The altercation between the two is symbolically and structurally significant in the novel. It occurs at the end of the second quarter of the novel, at the midpoint of the narrative. A whole series of semantically unstable binary terms structure this scene. It is at this point that the 'secret' of Fortunata's adulterous relationship with Juanito is 'not a secret' anymore. Maxi's 'private' domestic life becomes 'public' knowledge. Maxi's gender and sexual deviance becomes openly 'known' and named. Up until now, Maxi's deviance has been the "open secret" of the text.

Another one of the binaries that structures this scene is to see/to not see (*ver*/*no ver*). This particular binary is important because in sexological and medical discourse, the *marica* was recognizable through visible characteristics. To see, and thus to make known these characteristics was

to define the male invert. In this scene, Maxi is given a tip about Juanito and Fortunata's clandestine tryst, and he decides to confront them (Pérez Galdós 1994, 1: 704-09). He sees Juanito's carriage slowly driving up and down the street, and then waiting in front of a certain house. When Juanito leaves the house and makes for his carriage, he is followed by Maxi, who confronts him in the street. Maxi is pushed to the ground by Juanito, and after a struggle, Juanito manages to escape when his carriage passes by. Maxi, despondent and battered, starts yelling after him in a falsetto voice (Pérez Galdós 1994, 1: 707). A crowd gathers and starts offering their observations about what happened. One after another, the onlookers, who have seen the altercation, offer their theories: a quarrel, a fight over women. However, one person rejects those explanations and exclaims "¡Quita allá! ¿Pero no ves que es marica?" (Pérez Galdós 1994, 1: 708). It is the only place in the text where this word is written. The question is essentially a performative act commanding the reader 'to see' Maxi as a *marica*. Although a negative, in this instance the colloquial meaning of the phrase, "¿no ves?" (don't you see?) means precisely the opposite in the sense that the situation in question becomes obvious to everyone there as soon as it is uttered. The use of the negative *tú* command – *no ves* – has the effect of inscribing Maxi as a gender and sexual deviant. *Ver*, in this usage, is 'to see' but also 'to know'. The ambivalence by the narrator up until now has been a play on what is known and what is unknown about Maxi and his gender/sexual deviance. With the use of the word *marica* there is no doubt anymore.

The binary *ver*/*no ver* is also present the last half of the narrative. Throughout the second half of the novel, Maxi's insights into the world around him are indicative of his ability 'to see' and 'to know', when others do not see and thus do not understand. Maxi is not told of the whereabouts of Fortunata, who has left him because she is pregnant with Juanito Santa Cruz's child, for fear that this might unbalance him further. Instead of being told where Fortunata is, Maxi is told that she is dead. Unbelieving, his reaction to the news is suspicion, and he replies to his brother Juan Pablo: "Mira, chico, aunque parece que estoy trastornado, *veo* más claro que todos vosotros" (Pérez Galdós 1994, 2: 401; emphasis added). Maxi ultimately deduces where Fortunata is staying and figures out that she is pregnant (Pérez Galdós 1994, 2: 381).

Maxi's oscillation between sanity and madness and his insights into the people and events around him convince everyone that he is insane,

even when at the same time there is evidence that he is not. At one point, Maxi completes some difficult arithmetic tasks without a mistake: "¿Pero usted qué se ha figurado? Si tengo yo la cabeza como no la he tenido nunca. Si estoy tan cuerdo, que me sobra cordura para darla a muchos que por cuerdos pasan" (Pérez Galdós 1994, 2: 430-431).[12] After deducing where Fortunata is, Maxi confronts her with the knowledge that her rival for Juanito's affections, Aurora, and Juanito are having an affair (Pérez Galdós 1994, 2: 468):

> [Maxi] —Comprendo que te dé tan fuerte. Así me dio a mí; pero luego me he vuelto estoico [...]
>
> [Fortunata] —Porque tú no eres un hombre— interrumpiéndole [...].
>
> —Si les llegas a ver, acuérdate de mí. Hazte santa como yo [...] Les miras y pasas [...]
>
> —Tú no eres hombre [...] Tú no eres nada— exclamó la joven con desprecio (Pérez Galdós 1994, 2: 468- 469).

However, Fortunata cannot deny that Maxi has told her the truth. He may be insane by society's standards, but as she points out to Ballester: "[...] las grandes verdades las dicen los niños y los locos" (Pérez Galdós 1994, 2: 500). But Fortunata insists that he is not a man: "Unos dicen que estás cuerdo, y otros que estás loco. Yo creo que estás cuerdo, pero que no eres hombre; has perdido la condición de hombre, y no tienes [...] vamos al decir, amor propio ni dignidad [...]" (Pérez Galdós 1994, 2: 497). Maxi's insightfulness, or his ability to see (*ver*) into the events around him at the end of the novel contrasts sharply with his misunderstandings earlier, when he did not 'know', or 'see', the truth about his relationship with Fortunata.

In conclusion, *Fotunata y Jacinta* questions masculine gender and sexual norms through the most unlikely of protagonists, Maxi Rubín. His labeling as a *marica* is a structurally significant, performative act within a novel in which clear-cut distinctions between the complex interconnections between families, the exchange economy, the public and private spheres, and gender and sexual norms are impossible. The *marica*, a boundary figure for masculine gender and male sexuality during the late nineteenth century in Spain, becomes visible and knowable through characteristics that transgress normativity. Indeed, it is through the semantic

12 See Sander Gilman (1985: 168-172).

play in the novel created by the binaries to see/to not see and to know/to not know that a space is created for the modern homosexual subject to be visible and knowable.

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